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recurs, and it is one of vital consequence to the party accused, whether these mistakes may not in the main be very easily traced to his circumstances, to his confident expectation of aid from government, which he never received, and of cooperation with other branches of the army, which never took place, and without both of which there was no possibility of his effecting what was required of him. The public documents and letters published by him answer this question decidedly in the affirmative, and ought to produce an impression on the public mind at least, far different from that left by the decision of the court martial.

In addition to their personal bearing, these memoirs contain many facts of historical value, relating to the last war. The appendix speaks of the author's services in the revolution.

5.—*A Communication on the Improvement of Government ; read before the American Philosophical Society, at a Meeting attended by General Lafayette, Oct. 1st, 1824.* By CHARLES J. INGERSOLL. 12mo. pp. 24. Philadelphia. A. Small. 1824.

It has grown to be a favorite occupation with scholars and politicians to watch the progress of society and governments, arts and institutions, to talk of the influence of one on another, and of their combined effect on the human character, and to contemplate the changes and grand achievements, which are to mark the features of coming ages. The mind has taken this direction in modern times. Three centuries ago, who tasked himself to dream or inquire what would be the state of the world at this day? Who traced existing principles to ultimate results, or predicted from new discoveries in science, or a new step in political advancement, what mysteries of nature would be revealed, or what magnificent political fabrics would be reared at any future period? The art of printing arose as a second sun on the world; it spread the light of intellect and truth, and recorded the progress of knowledge on pages open to the inspection of all mankind. The acquirements of genius, and the discoveries of accident have been preserved; data have thus been accumulated; experiments have been tried and their results noted, and each link in the chain, in any stage of its increase, may be seen by itself, and compared with the others. Hence it is, that the past affords some insight into the future; there is uniformity in nature, and the machinery which moves society is at different times similarly affected by similar causes. This is the foundation of the prophetic tendency, which the speculations of thinking men are taking at the present day. It is pleasing to range in the uncertainty of the future, and mould things according to our liking, to build up a

happy nation on the basis of equal rights in one country, and tumble to the dust the overgrown and self destroying despotisms of another. It is gratifying to our love of power, thus to draw nature and time into our service, and employ them in accomplishing the great improvement to which we look forward in the condition of man.

But these remarks have a very slight bearing on Mr Ingersoll's Address. It is true his subject is the improvement of government, but nevertheless he dwells not so much on what is to be, as on what has been, and now is. He goes back no farther than the American Revolution, and he describes briefly the conquest, which has been made since that period, over prejudice, ignorance, despotism, and other enemies of human improvement and happiness.

‘Commerce, and the Press, rapidly disseminate improvements, and add great influence to intelligence. Thirty millions of educated people, now in Europe and America, more than there were a few years since, and their number increasing in geometrical ratio—all intensely studious of political philosophy—create another empire within every state, continually seeking ascendancy. And this empire, though separated throughout many nations and by intervening seas, is nevertheless one and indivisible in its views and sympathies. Public opinion, no longer spent in the vacuum of oral tradition, is girt with omnipotence by the independent press, whose piercing rays no sanctuary can keep out. Superstition and ignorance are fallen into obscurity. Organised societies of all sects and nations, are in victorious crusade against their last holds. Religion itself must soon be free. Already laws are the popular will, even when otherwise ostensibly enacted. Divine right to passive obedience is scarcely asserted. Equality of individuals and of nations, the advantages of unrestrained intercourse, the mischiefs of all superfluous governance, are becoming established principles of international and of municipal law. Political economy, which has remained till lately almost unthought of, since the suggestions of Plato on that subject, has taken an eminent place among modern sciences. Labor and economy are recognised as the wealth of nations. Monopoly, exclusion, local preferences and factitious counteraction, are felt and treated as issues of calamity; and but few parasites utter the preposterous flattery, that private luxury and public extravagance invigorate circulation and replenishment. Political philosophy is almost as much improved.’ pp. 5—7.

These are encouraging views of the present state of civilised countries, and afford enlivening anticipations for the future. The author adds, in the same spirit of comprehensive observation,

‘I believe we may rest assured, that the political, intellectual and physical state of man, is generally improved and improving.

Jury trial and other great amendments are taking effect among the tractable East Indians. Steam boats are employed in Astrakan and Siberia. Newspapers are published at Pekin. Almost the same political economy is proclaimed, if not practised, throughout Europe and America. A corner of creation, towards which the rest looks with fondness, as the ancient mart of the mind, without any force but the energy of despair, or hope but that of the auspices of the age, has for several years annually sacrificed hecatombs of Turks to independence. Even Egypt, the preceptress of Greece, gives signs of the understanding that precedes it. If, in the definition of Shakspeare, which Burke pronounced the best,

Man is a creature holding large discourse,
Looking before and after—

his rights and interests are in full advancement. His discourse becoming freer, his forecast more rational, his recollections more philosophical; and, without regard to the mere form of government, the whole social organisation much ameliorated.' pp. 10, 11.

Mr Ingersoll touches on several topics of great compass, each of which if pursued might lead us into a wide field of inquiry and remark. His words are few but they are fertile in meaning, and much depth of thought is perceived under a narrow surface of visible signs. The performance as a whole indicates haste; it is immature, and a little too indefinite in some of its parts. The style of the author, also, which is usually remarkable for its point and perspicuity, is not so well finished as in some of his other writings. He tells us of the disciples of a philosophy 'invincibly armed against the *despotism of individuality*,' and talks of 'the *actuality* of a beneficent government;' and he characterises the preamble to Franklin's memorable Treaty, as one 'containing the whole philosophy of government, whose deities are equality and reciprocity, whose demons are burdensome preferences, national and individual, foreign and municipal.' The closing pages of the discourse, referring particularly to the presence of General Lafayette, are appropriate, and express lofty and just sentiments.

6.—*The Auction System; being a Series of Numbers published in the Federal Gazette, addressed to the Citizens of Baltimore.* 8vo. pp. 44. J. D. Toy. Baltimore. 1824.

THAT the subject of sales at auction is about to assume much importance among us, is obvious from the excitement which it produced during the last session of Congress, by the petitions and counter petitions sent up from almost every city in the Union. These same circumstances would also indicate, that it is a subject